

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IX IRAN

apace, and before long it was found that larger premises were needed for its offices. In January, 1945, new and sumptuous quarters were inaugurated in the presence of Premier Bayat and the usual array of Iranian and Soviet notables. Eventually three large buildings, easily accessible to the Iranian public, served the aims of Soviet propaganda in Teheran. These were the House of Culture, the standing Soviet Exhibition, and the Y.O.K.S. branch headquarters.

Radio constituted another powerful means of disseminating news favorable to Moscow. The Iranian government was obliged to grant to the Allies a certain amount of time on Radio Teheran for war propaganda. The time was divided between the British and the Russians, but the British ceded part of their time to smaller Allied nations such as France, Poland, Netherlands, and Belgium. The legations of these countries devoted their time to programs concerning their own war efforts. The Soviet programs were longer and, as the war progressed, more and more hostile to the West. After the crisis in Soviet-Iranian relations created by the oil problem in 1944, Soviet radio programs from the Teheran station were occasionally devoted to criticisms of the Iranian government itself. At one time such procedures resulted in dramatic tension. As soon as the Soviet spokesman finished his tirade against the Iranian authorities, another voice was heard from the same station. It was the Iranian Director of Propaganda, Safavi, who denied Soviet accusations and stated that Teheran radio would not be permitted to become an instrument of anti-Iranian propaganda. For an Iranian official this was, under

these circumstances, an extraordinary feat of courage. Shortly afterwards Safavi was replaced without explanation.¹⁴

The distribution of Soviet publications to Iranian libraries and newspaper stands was well organized. *Izvestia*, *Pravda*, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, and *War and the Working Class* were available at the most important points of Teheran. A bookstore on one of the principal thoroughfares, Avenue Firdausi, was almost exclusively devoted to Sonet books and pamphlets published in Russian, Persian, and other languages.

az, July 29, 1945; *Journal de Tehran*, July 15, 1945; for the Soviet interpretation see *Pravda*, July 26, 1945.